

Reintegration Experiences of Internal Return Migrants in the Wa Municipality, Ghana

By

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Abstract

In Ghana, studies on returnees' reintegration are mostly limited to international return migrants from western countries. This paper, therefore, explores the reintegration experiences of internal return migrants resident in the Wa municipality. Using the mixed method approach, the study surveyed 150 return migrants and interviewed 10 key informants.

The results indicate that the main reintegration difficulty encountered among returnees was frequent family demands followed by unemployment/low incomes among others. To mitigate these problems, some of the returnees had to relocate completely from their family houses and others engaged in petty trading activities to satisfy basic needs. The chi-square statistic test results indicate a significant association between returnees' length of stay, age, level of education and marital status vis-a-vis challenges faced in reintegration into their communities. Consequently, most of the returnees expressed their desire to re-migrate in future perhaps due to the difficulties they faced in the reintegration process.

The study recommends that government and other relevant stakeholders such as IOM develop strategies to assist return migrants to reintegrate favourably into their communities in order to avoid future out-migrations. For instance, assistance such as small loans and skills training could be offered to returnees to enable them reintegrate.

Keywords: Reintegration, Return migrants, Southern Ghana, Wa Municipality

1.0 Introduction

The three northern regions of Ghana have the highest number of rural out-migrants in the country. Meanwhile, the percentage of the population of the three regions has been less than 20.0% since 1970 (Ghana Statistical Service-GSS, 2012). This phenomenon is due to north-south migration which has been widely attributed to low socio-economic development and unfavourable physical characteristics in the north. According to Awumbila (2007) and Tanle (2014), the consequence of uneven development between the north and south has been that 'the north' has constituted a major source of labour supply for the industries and agriculture in the south, reflecting the impoverishment in the north and the relative buoyant urban economy in the south.

This was partly due to the British colonial administration which initiated forced migration from the northern territories of the then Gold Coast to satisfy the need for cheap labour in the mining, timber, cocoa and oil palm plantation areas in the south (Songsore, 2003). There was a deliberate policy that designated the northern part of the country as a labour reservoir for the southern mining areas such as Obuasi, Konongo, Prestea and Tarkwa. Thus, Chiefs and other opinion leaders were mandated by the then District Commissioners to recruit able-bodied men as labourers for the mines, cocoa farms, the army and construction works in the forest and coastal areas (Tanle, 2014; 2010; Tanle, 2003; Songsore, 2003; Songsore & Denkabe, 1995). This was followed by voluntary seasonal migration of mainly young people from the north to the south during the long dry season in the north (Anarfi, Kwankye, Ababio & Tiemoko, 2003; Tanle, 2010).

The other factors that necessitated the north-south migration are seasonality of agriculture, population pressure on land leading to less land per farmer, land ownership problems, inadequate agricultural resources like credit for small farmer holders,

underdeveloped rural industry, absence of social amenities, increased deprivation and lack of entitlement failure in rural areas (GSS, 2012; Abdul-Korah, 2006).

Consequently, this pattern of migration (north-south) has attracted a number of studies (Tanle 2010; Kwankye et al., 2007; Hashim, 2007; Meier, 2005; Kubon, 2004; Mensah-Bonsu, 2003; Sulemana, 2003; Pellow, Tanle, 2003; 2001; Synnove, 1999; Abur-sufian, 1994; Zeng, 1993; Nabila, 1975; Oppong, 1967) particularly on the patterns, determinants and implications of north-south migration on both areas of origin and destination. Other studies on north-south migration focused on the migration of young females from the northern sector to the southern sector, particularly to Kumasi and Accra for the *kaya yei* business (Anarfi et al., 2009; Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Tanle and Awusabo-Asare, 2007; Awumbila & Kwankye, 2008; Whithead & Hashim, 2005).

However, in many of these studies, issues concerning return migration and returnees' reintegration are mostly glossed over despite the fact that most internal migratory movements in Ghana are largely transient which usually culminate in return migration. This has resulted in the dearth of literature on the theoretical and empirical bases for understanding internal return migration and the reintegration experiences of internal return migrants in the country. Nevertheless, IOM (2015) and Anarfi and Jagare (2005) recognize the fact that return migration is a complex process, and that more information is needed on the factors contributing to successful reintegration, sustainability as well as on indicators that can be used to measure the sustainability of return migration.

Regrettably, the few studies which have attempted to interrogate the phenomenon of returnees' reintegration in Ghana are mostly centred on international return migrants (IOM, 2015; Kyei, 2013; Mensah, 2012; Black & Gent, 2004). Meanwhile, a deep understanding of the dynamics of internal return migration including returnees' reintegration processes is an important topic that requires an inquest into empirically since it has some serious policies

relevant to the government and other policy makers. One of such policies is, the desire of various successive governments to reverse the current north-south migration trend which has been on the national policy agenda for decades.

To fill this gap of knowledge, therefore, this study sought to provide answers to the following research questions: What are the characteristics of those who return? What are the motivations for return? What are the processes and challenges involved in reintegration? What strategies do returnees employ to mitigate their reintegration difficulties? And do some returnees intend to re-migrate again in future? In addressing these research questions, the study was guided by the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the socio-demographic profile of returnees and challenges associated with their reintegration in the Wa Municipality. This hypothesis was stated and tested because the degree of success in returnees' reintegration partly depends on their socio-cultural and demographic characteristics (Chirum, 2011). This study is important for two reasons: One, findings from this study will inform policies and programmes aimed at addressing the plight of return migrants in Ghana. Two, the study would also contribute to bridge the gap of knowledge on the subject of returnees' reintegration in Ghana.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Reasons for return migration

According to Yendaw (2013b) and King (2000), the decision to migrate back home involves a mixture of professional and personal motivations at both place of origin and destination. Thomas-Hope's (1999) study of migrants returning to Jamaica, for example, noted that the decision to return involves a combination of two sets of factors: the personal and domestic circumstances of the individual and his or her family and perceived conditions in the place of origin (including 'comfort level', environment, cost of living, level of crime,

opportunities for investment, political stability and attitudes towards returning migrants) (Thomas-Hope, 1999). Existing empirical evidence also shows that social and family-related reasons are of particular importance. Strong family ties, the wish to rejoin family and friends, homesickness, problems of adjustment at the destination, racial/ethnic harassment, and the aim to enjoy an improved social status back home are significant reasons for return migration (Ammassari & Black, 2001; cited in Yendaw, 2013b).

Other factors are related to migrants' stage in the lifecycle, as age brings changing needs and preferences (Ammassari & Black, 2001; cited in Yendaw, 2013b). They may return to get married, to care for elderly parents, or to take on particular family related responsibilities (Yendaw, 2013b). A series of in-depth interviews carried out with physicians further shed light on the phenomenon (Ganguly, 2003). The reasons the physicians gave for their return were quite mixed. According to Ganguly (2003), family-related reasons predominated, especially going home to care for aged parents followed by issues of discrimination at the destination.

Similarly, a study by Iredale, Rozario and Guo (2003) on return migration amongst skilled migrants in four Asian countries found that individual decisions to return home are made in response to a careful weighing up of personal factors, career-related prospects and the economic, political, and environmental climate. Iredale et al. (2003) also noted that social and family factors remain important for some potential returnees. Furthermore, Tiemoko's (2004) study of African migrants also indicates more emphasis on family factors. Carrying out in-depth interviews on migrants in London and Paris, Tiemoko (2004) found that family was one of the most important factors influencing return. At the same time, returnees cited family-related problems as one of the most common difficulties they encountered, and the expectation of such problems delayed the return of some migrants (Tiemoko, 2004). Some migration scholars have also examined the relationship between integration and assimilation

and return (Hoffmann-Nowotny, 1973; Esser, 1980). Hoffmann-Nowotny (1973) and Esser (1980) have also claimed that return migration occurred because migrants were unable to integrate or assimilate into the host society. From the forgoing argument, it is clear that migrants' reasons for return migration are multi-layered and context specific. In that regard, the current study explored the reasons for return migration within the Ghanaian context and used internal return migrants resident in the Wa Municipality of Ghana.

2.2 Challenges involved in reintegration

International Organization for Migration-IOM (2015) describes reintegration as the re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or process, for example, of a migrant into the society of his or her country/community of origin or habitual residence. Reintegration according to IOM (2015), Anarfi and Jagare (2005) is, thus, a process that enables the returnee to participate again in the social, cultural, economic and political life of his or her country or community of origin. Taft (1979) also defines returnees' reintegration as the original learning of migrants to adapt to the situations upon return to their original communities of childhood. For Taft (1979), the term reintegration often refers to emotional stability and freedom from internal conflicts and tensions-that is, freedom from psychoneuroses. However, this study focuses on return migrants' harmony or conflict with their external environment.

Existing literature provides paradigms of the reintegration problems returnees face once they are back to their communities of origin. In a study by Chirum (2011) and Gmelch (1980), it was discovered that the need to establish new friends, a slow pace of life, lack of social services, and lack of employment opportunities were the major deterrents to full integration for the majority of returnees to Western Ireland. Eikaas (1979) also observed that fear of social disgrace by those who had not done well at their various destinations, lack of job availability, changed personalities, and climatic conditions were the main barriers to

reintegration among returnees to the Caribbean. A study by Levine (1982) also found that low standard of living, housing shortages, a long wait for jobs, and family conflicts (particularly between husbands and wives) were the major re-integration problems for most Southeast Asian returnees.

In a similar investigation by Marmora and Gurrieri (1994) of Rio Della Plat indicate that individual attributes are among the major factors related to post-return resettlement challenges for most returnees. For example, in Namibia, Preston (1994) found that the inability of the majority of returnees to speak fluent English was the major deterrent to obtaining education and jobs. Many studies have also highlighted the sense of disappointment, isolation and feelings of alienation and not-belonging experienced by return migrants on their return as major challenges returnees encounter (Constable 1999; Long & Oxfeld, 2004; Christou 2006). Cerase (1974) has also investigated the reintegration experiences of Italian migrants from the US in the 1960s and 1970s and found that the longer the time spent away, the more difficult the reintegration in Italy and those who spent less than ten years in the US face the less difficulties. Cerase (1974) also found that those who retired back to Italy tended to become an isolated group because they were neither able nor willing to integrate themselves into the Italian society.

Again, a study by McGrath (1991) reveals that return migrants remained a separate and distinct community in the literature of migration. McGrath (1991) added that most returnees faced a range of different readjustment problems including: the poor economic situation and lack of employment opportunities; the unfriendly attitude of locals; and the inefficiency and slow pace of business activities. McGrath (1991) further observed that more than a quarter of returnees definitely intended to re-emigrate due to the problems faced. Zachariah and Rajan (2011) also indicated that indebtedness and unfavourable financial

status of return migrants are one of the main challenges in the reintegration process of returnees. The Financial situation after return and debt problems and access to money are obviously of crucial importance for setting up or revamping a life back after return. In another study, Rajan and Narayana (2010) in Kerala, found unemployment as a key disincentive for returnees' re-adjustment indicating that the state was ill prepared to receive returnees.

2.3 Theoretical issues on return migration and reintegration

Theoretical predictions regarding migration, return and reintegration have been advanced by various migration theories. These theories have produced certain basic concepts and perspectives in migration studies. Internal migration and return as a sub-process of migration has been subjected to various approaches and schools of thought that offer contrasting sets of propositions stemming from the Neo-classical Economics (NE), the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM), Structuralism, Transnationalism and Social Network Theories. According to the neo-classical perspective, the migration process is motivated by wage differentials between origin and destination areas, in which case migrants generally move from areas with low wages to those with higher wages (Borjas, 1989). Using this framework, Thomas (2008) argues that migrants will only return home if they fail to derive the expected benefit of higher earnings at the destination. Even though the neo-classical economic theory has contributed to the debate on the subject of migration and return, its basic tenets appear too narrow to explain the issues involved in migration, return and reintegration. This is because the theory primarily centred on economic factors without considering other socio-cultural factors which underpin migration, return and reintegration.

In contrast to the Neo-classical Theory, the NELM Theory considers return migration as part of a defined plan conceived by migrants before their departure from their places of

origin (Thomas, 2008). Adherents of this theory argue that the original plan of migrants includes designing an eventual return to their destinations after accumulating sufficient resources. Therefore, most migrants leave home with the intention of acquiring skills, savings, and other resources that would be useful to them upon their return home. The time at the destination is often considered a temporary enterprise, and most migrants are said to return home soon after they have achieved their goals (Ammassari 2004).

Structural Theories on return migration, on the other hand, stress the importance of the social, economic, and political conditions at the origin of migrants, not only as major factors in the decision to return, but also as components affecting the ability of return migrants to make use of the skills and resources that they have acquired at the destination (Diatta & Mbow 1999; Thomas-Hope, 1999). Unlike the other two theories above, structural theories of return migration do not consider the success of the migration experience as a key factor in the decision to return; instead they focus on the productivity of return migrants after arriving home. Structural theorists argue that returnees may not be able to reintegrate and consequently may decide to leave again if the “gap” between their own norms and values and those at home is too large (Cassarino, 2004). Alternatively, they may also respond to expectations at home by spending their savings on consumption or unproductive investments.

Transnationalism compared to the NE, NELM and Structural approaches, provides a better framework for explaining return and reintegration. It sees reintegration as a process of re-adaptation which may not entail the abandonment of the identities they acquire while at the destination. More importantly, there is less critical attention on any evidence supporting the challenges faced by returnees, particularly internal return migrants; hence, the purpose of this study. Within the context of this paper, reintegration is defined as the process of give-and-take at the places of origin because return migrants learn to live with their families and

communities back home (Kyei, 2013). Potter (2005) and Preston (1993) argue that upon return from a chosen destination, the migrant needs to be reintegrated into the original society as it will be unrealistic to assume that the social and economic milieu to which migrants returned, had not changed since they left their communities. There is also the need to appreciate the different social settings of the two destinations in question. Several factors determine the extent to which migrants would be estranged upon their return home. These, according to N'Laoire (2007) include the age of the migrant prior to leaving home, the length of time spent at the destination, the nature of contacts with family members and friends back home among others.

There is no doubt that all the theories espoused above have contributed significantly to a better understanding of return migration and returnees' reintegration, but the Structural and Transnationalism Theories guided the current study. This is because most of the issues discussed in their level of analyses relate perfectly to the objectives of this study. For example, the Structural Theories have recognized the importance of returnees' reintegration. To this end, Cassarino (2004) argues that most returnees may not be able to reintegrate and may decide to re-emigrate back if the "gulf" between their own norms and values and those at home are too large to cope with. This implies that returnees face challenges in trying to settle into their communities. The Neo-classical Economics and NELM Theories on the other hand were less considered in the study because they mainly concentrated on explaining the reasons for return migration. In addition, most of their basic assumptions dwelled on economic related factors without assessing the other socio-cultural factors which underpin the dynamics involved in return migration and returnees' reintegration.

3.0 Study Setting

The study was undertaken in the Wa Municipality (Figure 1), a place known for youth out-migration and return in the Upper West Region (Wa Municipal Assembly-WMA, 2014; Tanle & Awusabo-Asare, 2007). Wa Municipality is one of the eleven District/Municipal

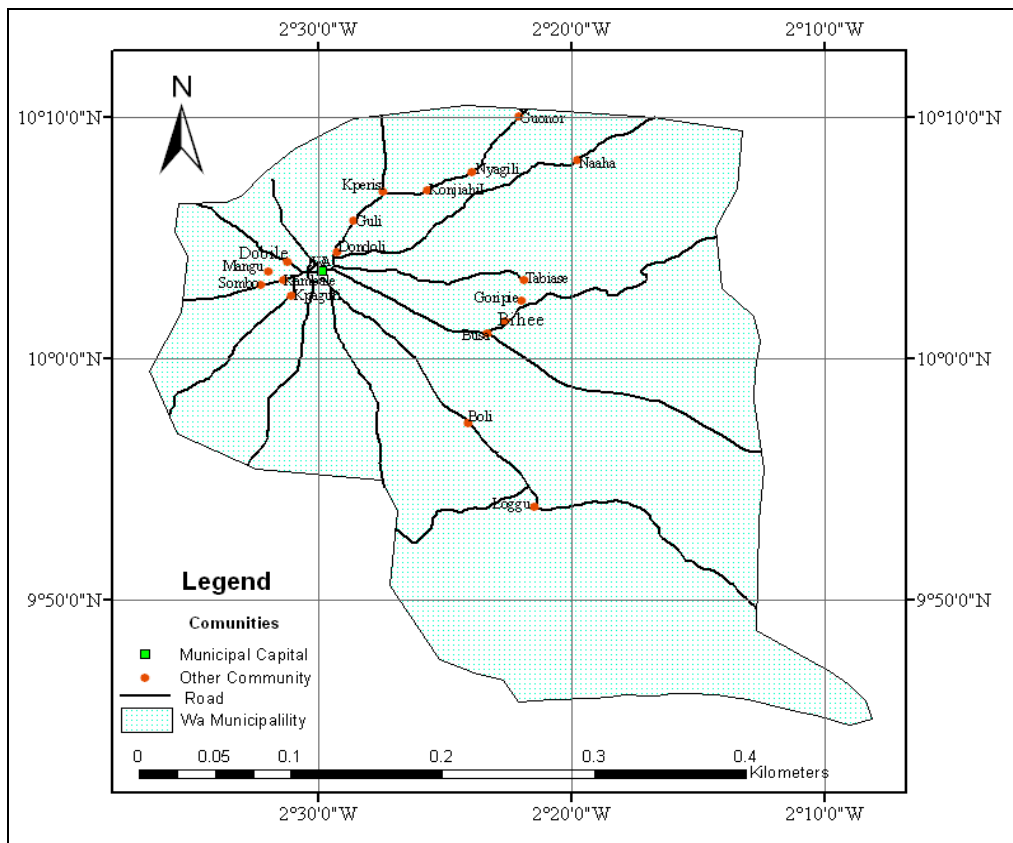


Figure 1: A Map of Wa Municipality showing the study area

Source: Wa Municipal Assembly, 2014

Assemblies that make up the Upper West Region of Ghana. It was upgraded from the then Wa District with Legislative instrument (L1) 1800 in pursuant of the policy of decentralization with Wa as the municipal capital in 2004. The Municipality shares administrative boundaries with Nadowli-Kaleo District to the North, Wa East District to the East and South and the Wa West District to the West and South. It lies within latitudes

1°40'N to 2°45'N and longitudes 9°32' to 10°20'W (GSS, 2012; Wa Municipal Assembly-WMA, 2014). It is the regional capital of the Upper West Region and has a landmass of approximately 234.74 square kilometres, which is about 6.4% of the region (Figure 1).

The vegetation of Wa Municipality is the Guinea Savannah grassland type which is made up of short trees with little or no canopy and shrubs of varying heights and luxuriance. The most common trees are shea, dawadawa, kapok and baobab. Wa Municipality has two marked seasons namely, the wet and dry seasons. The mean annual rainfall varies between 840mm and 1400mm (WMA, 2014). Due to prolong dry season, infertile soils, inadequate socio-economic opportunities and rising poverty levels, most young people in the Wa municipality adopt migration as a survival strategy by travelling to towns and cities in southern Ghana in search of greener pastures. The Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions are the main destination areas of most of these young people (Songsore, 2003; Abdul-Korah, 2006; Tanle, 2010). The total population of the Wa Municipality is 107,214 and forms 15.3 percent of the population of Upper West Region (GSS, 2012). Of this number, 49.4 percent are males while 50.6 percent are females.

4.0 Data and methods

The study employed an explorative research design to unravel the reintegration problems of return migrants resident in the Wa Municipality. According to Burns and Groove (2001) explorative research is conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas, and for increasing knowledge of a phenomenon. Explorative research approach was suitable for this study because issues of returnees' reintegration remained bereft in Ghana and so this approach helped revealed the reintegration experiences of internal return migrants in a better fashion. The study was guided by the mixed method approach which includes both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques.

Both primary and secondary data/information was generated for the study. The primary data was collected from the field. In addition, both interview schedules and in-depth interview guides were used while the secondary information was gathered from the Municipal Assembly records, Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) reports and published articles which treat different aspects of the study. The target population for the study included return migrants aged 18 years and above who have ever travelled to the southern part of Ghana, stayed there for at least five years and returned to the Wa Municipality within the last five years prior to the survey.

A preliminary survey conducted in the study area through snowballing revealed a total of 240 return migrants who met the criteria were included. Out of that number, a sample size of 150 respondents was obtained using Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size determination. Using 5% margin of error, the sample size was arrived at as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = the sample size, N = the sample frame, and e = margin of error.

Therefore, n= the sample size N= the sample frame = 240 e = the margin of error =5%

$$n = \frac{240}{1 + 240(0.05)^2} = 150$$

In addition, 10 key informants comprising five non-migrants and five returnees were also interviewed to enrich the study.

The respondents were selected through the snowballing, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. First, the snowballing technique was used to identify all the 240 return migrants who met the criteria for the study. Afterwards, the simple random sampling technique was then used to select the sample size of 150 respondents. The purposive sampling technique on the other hand was used to select 10 key informants for the qualitative investigation. Interview schedule and in-depth interview guide were the main instruments

used in the data collection exercise. The interview schedule was used to collect data from the returnees while the in-depth interview guide was administered to the key informants. An interview schedule was used because most return migrants in the Wa municipality are illiterates (GSS, 2012).

The instruments were structured into five main modules namely A, B, C, D and E. Module A consisted of the background characteristics of the respondents, module B discussed the motivation for their return migration to the Wa municipality while module C explored challenges associated with reintegration. The fourth module (module D), interrogated strategies returnees use to overcome challenges of reintegration while the last module which is module E examined their future intentions to re-migration. The instruments were pre-tested at Nadowli, which has similar socio-demographic characteristics as the Wa Municipality. The main reason for the pre-test was to correct all errors which were likely to show up during the actual data collection exercise and to guarantee their validity and reliability.

All issues relating to ethics were strictly adhered to. For instance, ethical concerns such as confidentiality, privacy, anonymity, and informed consent were strictly adhered to. That apart, an ethical clearance was obtained from the University for Development Studies (UDS) Ethical Preview Board before the data collection commenced. The data obtained was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative analytic techniques. The qualitative data was first edited, crosschecked, transcribed and analysed manually while the quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) version 21. Figures, frequencies, percentages and tables were used to present the data. The hypothesis that, there is no significant relationship between socio-demographic profile of returnees and challenges associated with reintegration was tested using a chi-square test statistic. The background

profile (such as sex, marital status, education and length of stay) was the independent variable while challenges of reintegration constituted the dependent variables.

5.0 Results and Discussions

5.1 Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Table 1 indicates that more than one third (34.0%) of the respondents were aged 28-37 years and over half (51.7%) males. The study further showed that most of the returnees had no formal education (50.7%) followed by those with primary level education (28.7%). The majority of the respondents were mostly married (76.0%) and a few of them (5.3%) were widows. In terms of their religious affiliation, 52.7% were Christians followed by those who were Muslims (34.7%).

The current occupation of respondents as shown in Table 1 showed that over one-third (34.7%) of them were traders followed by those who were farmers (28.0%). These confirm the results of GSS (2012) that most inhabitants of Wa municipality are into trading related activities. One striking observation from the results was that as high as 26.0% of the respondents were unemployed. Regarding the duration of stay in southern Ghana, the study indicates that the majority of the returnees (56.0%) resided at their destinations between 5-9 years followed by those who stayed between 10-14 years (23.3%). The present evidence where the majority of the respondents are young male adults goes to support the results of GSS (2012) on internal migration where most north-south migrants are relatively youthful.

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18-27	41	27.3
28-37	51	34.0
38-47	31	20.7
48-57	20	13.3
58 and above	7	4.7
Sex		
Male	62	41.3
Female		
Education		
No education	76	50.7
Primary	43	28.7
JHS/ML	21	14.0
SHS/TECH/VOC	6	4.0
Tertiary	4	2.6
Marital status		
Single	13	8.7
Married	114	76.0
Divorced/Separated	15	10.0
Widowed	8	5.3
Current occupation		
Artisans	10	6.7
Farming	42	28.0
Trading	52	34.7
Unemployed	39	26.0
Student	2	1.3
Public/civil servants	5	3.3
Duration of stay at last destination		
5-9	84	56.0
10-14	34	23.3
15-19	15	10.0
20-24	9	6.0
25-29	3	2.0
30 and above	4	2.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

5.2 Reasons for return migration

This section of the study assessed the motivations for the return migration of the respondents.

This was important because migrants' reasons for the return could have some influence on their successful reintegration (Gmelch, 1980; King, 2000). Table 2 has shown that closely

about one-third (32.1%) of the respondents said their main reason for return was due to family related reasons (e.g. care for elderly parents, get married etc) followed by unemployment/low incomes at their destinations (24.9%). These revelations are said to be in conflict with the basic assumptions of the success-failure dichotomy espoused by Lee (1984), Gmelch (1980) and Borjas and Bratsberg (1996) who opined that most migrants return to their origin communities due to failure at their destinations. For instance, migrants' failure to secure lucrative jobs at the destination can trigger a return. The results, however, lends credence to what Yendaw (2013b) found among international return migrants to Ghana where family related reasons were cited amongst the most important reasons influencing return (including family ties, the wish to rejoin family, to get married or to care for ailing parents back home). The findings further confirm the family strategy perspective where the family unit plays a very crucial role in migration decisions making including return migration (King, 2000).

Table 2: Reasons for return migration

Reasons for return	Sex of returnees		% of Total
	Male (%)	Female (%)	
Unemployment/low incomes	22.1	28.8	24.9
Adjustment difficulties	19.3	23.1	20.9
Family factors	28.3	37.5	32.1
Accumulated savings	23.4	6.7	16.5
Health related reasons	3.4	1.0	2.4
Discrimination	1.4	2.9	2.0
Others	2.1	0.0	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Regarding the sex of the respondents and their main reasons for return, the result revealed that females (37.5%) are more likely to respond to family related factors for return compared to their male counterparts (28.3%). It was also discovered that while 20.9% said they returned to the Wa municipality because they had problems adjusting at their various destinations, as much as 16.5% noted that their return was due to the fact that they have accumulated some money for investment (Table 2). An in-depth interview held with a 26 year old female returnee narrates how she was compelled to come home because of family pressure: *“...Look my return to Wa was due to family pressure especially from my parents. They keep worrying me about marriage saying that all my colleagues are settled and you are in Kumasi roaming about. My father even threatened that if I don’t come home he will disown me as his first daughter and so I was compelled to come home to get married. Anyway, I have no regret I have four beautiful children now. In any case I will not advice friends to travel there because Kumasi is not easy if you are not strong...”* [A 26 year female returnee from Kumasi].

Another return migrant aged 35 also had this to say about the difficulties she faced in adjusting at the new destination and how she was finally compelled to come home due to family reasons: *“...I returned home as a result of some problems I faced in Accra. In fact, it was difficult for me to get accommodation, cost of living was generally high and nobody was ready to assist. That apart, my mother was sick and so I had to come back home to care for her because I am the elder son...”* [A 35 year old male return migrant from Accra]. The present evidence (Table 2) where a large proportion of females (32.1%) were motivated to return because of family-related considerations was certainly anticipated. It, therefore, could be that naturally, women’s maternal, domestic and conjugal roles are such that they are sometimes compelled to return home. This explains why a large percentage of females than males returned for the purpose of family related reasons (Yendaw, 2013b).

5.3 Challenges of reintegration and strategies adopted by return migrants

This part of the study which formed the main focus of the investigation discusses the challenges that return migrants face in settling into their communities. Table 3 indicates that a large proportion (86.0%) of the respondents said they are faced with reintegration difficulties and only 14.0% per cent said otherwise. Among respondents who admitted that they were confronted with difficulties in settling into their communities, 32.7% of them cited frequent family demands as the major difficulty working against their successful reintegration followed by unemployment and low incomes (22.3%). It was also discovered that as high as 22.1% of the returnees complained about frustrations which they face in the study area.

The findings above are in consonance with results of previous studies by Chirum (2011), Christou (2006), Long and Oxfeld (2004) and Mollica, McInnes, Poole & Tor (1998), who observed that return migrants upon return either voluntarily or involuntarily encounter challenges in order to fit into their origin societies. However, it is possible that the current challenges which the respondents face could be as a result of the nature of their return migration. The study, therefore, revealed that most of the respondents returned to the municipality because of family related factors followed by unemployment and low incomes at their destinations. These factors might have affected their reintegration process negatively. An in-depth interview held with a non-migrant key informant narrated some of the difficulties returnees face when they come home: *“...You see, when they come back like that they have to start all over because they are not aware of a lot of things back home. But the most serious challenges returnees face include too much expectations from their family members, loss of networks and also some cannot even remember some aspect any of their traditions...”*[A 32 year old non-migrant male from Wa].

Table 3: Challenges of reintegration and strategies adopted by return migrants

Challenges of reintegration	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Difficulty reintegrating</i>		
Yes	129	86.0
No	21	14.0
Total	150	100.0
<i>Specific reintegration difficulties</i>		
Frequent family demands	74	27.9
Lost traditions and family entitlements	34	12.7
Difficulty establishing networks	18	6.8
Slow business environment	24	9.1
Unemployment & low incomes	59	22.3
Frustrations	56	22.1
<i>Reintegration strategies</i>		
Relocation from family house	39	26.0
Attending social gatherings	10	6.7
Multiple livelihood activities	20	13.3
Casual labour	22	14.7
Petty trading	10	6.7
Galamsey (illegal mining)	28	18.7
Support with family business	21	14.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

*Frequency exceeds 129 because of multiple responses

Another in-depth interview conducted with a 27 year old female returnee who had made multiple moves to destinations in southern Ghana shared her story on how she finds it extremely difficult to reintegrate in Wa: “...My brother, if you are connected to the president of Ghana tell him that we are suffering and we need jobs. In Wa here, it is difficult to find any job to do apart from farming and even the farming itself you need capital (money) and land but I don't have them. I am currently helping my mother to sell vegetables in the market which doesn't fetch us any good money because sometimes

people don't buy much and remember the business is for my mother and not mine. But if I was in southern Ghana, at least in a day someone could ask me to help carry his/her luggage or help in any other small job for instant payment of money. In the case of Wa such jobs do not exist. Life in Wa is frustrating my brother because nothing works for me but I am waiting to see what God has for me 'hahaaa'-laughing [27-year old female return migrant from Accra].

The results in Table 3 also highlight some of the strategies that returnees adopt in the Wa Municipality to mitigate some of their reintegration difficulties. The analysis indicate that most returnees relocate away from their family houses (26.0%) to reduce family pressure followed by those who said they were compelled to engage in illegal mining (Galamsey) (18.7%) to satisfy basic needs. The study further reveals that 14.7% of some returnees work as casual labourers (mixing and carrying concrete for construction work and weeding on farms) while others support with family businesses (14.0%). Meanwhile, as much as 13.3% of the returnees also said they cope by diversifying their livelihood activities (engaging in multiple livelihoods) (Table 3).

An in-depth interview held with two return migrants in the study area made the following remarks on the reintegration strategies adopted: *"...My brother, my main challenge now is too much family demands and how to make trusted friends. When you travel and return like this the family thinks you have made a lot of money and all their problems are always on you. Since I came, the pressure from my relatives is just unbearable and because of that I have moved away from my family house to rent elsewhere. Another problem is that you know when you are away from home for some years, you lose all your friends when you finally return and you have to start again. So what I do is that I attend all important social gatherings in my community in order to make friends and get along. For instance, I don't joke with Church activities, marriage and naming ceremonies and funerals. If you don't attend others funerals or naming ceremonies, nobody will come for yours..."* [A 26-year female returnee from Accra]. This was another exposé by one of the return migrant on how he combines more than one job just to make ends meet *"...When I first arrived I had nothing to do because I could not save enough towards my return. Lucky on my side, I was*

introduced to a business man who gave me one of his mini commercial buses to drive. So as I am talking to you now I'm a "Trotro" driver. Apart from that, I have made a small farm which I attend to every weekend. My brother, if you don't do more than one jobs you cannot survive in Wa..." [A 29- year old male "trotro" driver from Kumasi].

The above revelations support findings by Anarfi & Jagare (2005) who found that most returnees reintegrate by attending alumni and hometown association meetings, joining religious groups and churches, linking up with former friends and colleagues at meetings, training sessions and workshops, in addition to building up a network of friends through exchange of addresses, phone numbers and e-mail contact as well as attending social gatherings to improve upon their status and build social networks.

5.4 Socio-demographic profile of returnees and challenges faced in reintegration

This section sought to ascertain whether the socio-demographic profile (age, sex, education, marital status and length of stay) of the returnees could influence the type of reintegration challenges they encountered. The essence was not to establish causality between the two but to provide an explanation on whether there is any relationship between returnees' background characteristics and the reintegration challenges they faced. To this end, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between returnees' socio-demographic profile and challenges associated with their reintegration was tested using a Chi-Square Test.

Results from the Chi-Square Test (Table 4) showed that while a significant association between returnees age and unemployment and low incomes ($\chi^2= 13.097$; $p=0.011$) was found, no significant association was observed between age and the other reintegration challenges faced. That is, unemployment and low incomes were higher with increases in returnees' age and those who were young (18-37 years) experienced more

Table 4: Socio-demographic profile of returnees and challenges faced in reintegration

Variables	Re-adjustment problems					
	Family Demands (%)	Lost of traditions & entitlements (%)	Difficulty forming social networks (%)	Slow business environment (%)	Unemployment & low incomes (%)	Frustrations (%)
<i>Age</i>						
18-27	25.7	17.7	38.9	25.0	39.3	30.5
28-37	35.1	32.4	22.2	33.3	37.5	30.5
38-47	18.9	32.4	22.2	8.3	12.5	22.0
48-57	16.2	14.7	5.6	20.8	8.9	13.6
58+	4.1	2.9	11.1	12.5	1.8	3.4
X²	* 3.251	*4.120	*4.306	*7.953	*13.097	*0.713
P-value	*0.517	*0.390	*0.366	*0.093	*0.011	*0.950
<i>Sex</i>						
Male	60.8	58.8	61.1	54.2	64.3	49.2
Female	39.2	41.2	38.9	45.8	35.7	50.9
X²	* 0.509	*0.009	* 0.076	* 0.191	*1.536	*3.608
P-value	* 0.476	*0.925	* 0.783	*0.662	*0.215	*0.057
<i>Education</i>						
No education	55.4	52.9	38.9	75.0	53.6	55.9
Basic education	29.7	32.4	33.3	16.7	17.9	30.5
Secondary/Higher	14.9	14.7	27.8	8.3	28.6	13.6
X²	* 1.930	*0.474	*1.629	*6.742	*10.409	*1.974
P-value	*0.381	*0.789	*0.443	*0.034	*0.005	*0.373
<i>Marital status</i>						
Unmarried	29.7	20.6	33.3	20.8	23.2	28.8
Married	70.3	79.4	66.7	79.2	76.8	71.2
X²	*2.256	*0.440	*0.815	*0.250	*0.134	*0.936
P-value	*0.0133	*0.507	* 0.367	*0.617	*0.714	*0.333
<i>Length of stay</i>						
5-9	50.0	61.8	55.6	29.2	69.6	52.5
10-14	29.7	20.6	16.7	33.3	19.6	28.8
15-19	20.3	17.7	27.8	37.5	10.7	18.6
X²	*1.809	*0.985	*1.692	*9.789	*8.839	*0.372
P-value	*0.405	*0.611	*0.429	*0.007	*0.012	*0.830

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Alpha level = ≤ 0.05

unemployment and lower earnings (76.8%) compared to those who were older. This is consistent with national demographics where unemployment and incomes are lower among the youth in Ghana (GSS, 2012).

Similarly, there is a significant relationship between education and slow business environment ($X^2= 6.742$; $p=0.034$) and unemployment and low incomes ($X^2= 10.409$; $p=0.005$). For example, whereas 75% of returnees with no formal education encountered more difficulties with the nature of the business environment in the study area, only 8.3% of those with secondary/higher education complained of the slow pace of business activities in the area. Additionally, while unemployment and low earnings was higher among returnees with no formal education (53.6%), only 17.9% of those with basic education and 28.6% of those with secondary/higher education experienced unemployment and low incomes as challenges associated with reintegration in the Wa municipality. The above relation was congruent with findings of Ghana Statistical Service reports (2012) where unemployment is very high among young people with no or little education.

Even though sex of the respondents indicated no significant relationship with their reintegration problems, it was observed in the data (Table 4) that males experienced more challenges with reintegration than their female counterparts. For instance, with respect to respondents who experienced frequent family demands, males encountered more family dependency than females. This evidence is in conformity with the traditions of most Ghanaian societies where males are seen as breadwinners of most families (GSS, 2012). Besides, a strong relationship was further discovered between returnees marital status and high family demands ($X^2= 2.256$; $p=0.0133$). This was expected because married couples are more likely to experience high family demands compared to unmarried people. The reason is that marriage is selective of responsible adults and society expects married people to be more responsible than singles.

In terms of the returnees' length of stay in southern Ghana and that of their reintegration difficulties, the study generally showed that returnees who stayed for a shorter period (5-9 years) at the last destination faced more challenges of reintegration compared to those who stayed longer (10 years and above). In particular, a Chi-Square Test results revealed a strong association between length of stay at last destination and unemployment/low incomes ($X^2=2.256$; $p=0.0133$) and slow business environment ($X^2=9.789$; $p=0.007$) where shorter stay returnees experienced more unemployment/low incomes and faced more difficulties in doing business as compared to those who stayed longer at their destinations.

The present findings contradict what Cerase (1974), Gmelch (1980), King (2000) and Gosh (2000) observed that migrants who stayed longer at their last destinations usually have more challenges with reintegration compared to those who stayed longer. The main reason for the current evidence could, however, be that perhaps migrants who stayed longer at their respective destinations have accumulated the needed economic resources for investment and are, therefore, less likely to encounter unemployment and low incomes. Moreover, those who stayed longer are more likely to build weak ties with family members than those who stayed shorter and are less likely to yield to family dependency (Table 4).

5.5 Intentions to re-migrate

The study finally tried to ascertain whether the respondents intend to migrate again in future due to the reintegration difficulties encountered. Results from Table 5 have shown that 62.0% of the respondents said they intend to migrate again in future while about 40.0% said otherwise. The present revelation where a large percentage of the returnees said they intend to migrate again to southern Ghana could be due to the challenges confronting their successful reintegration. The present findings buttresses what the structural theories have observed on returnees' reintegration which indicated that returnees may not be able to

Table 5: Intentions to re-migrate

Intention to migrate	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	93	62
No	57	38
Total	150	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

reintegrate and may decide to re-emigrate if the “gap” between their own norms and values and those at home is too large (Cassarino, 2004). In connection with the returnees’ re-migration intentions, this was the observation made by a non-migrant key informant about the migration behaviour of returnees in the municipality: “..Mostly, return migrants run back to southern Ghana when they face some difficulties in the cause of reintegration. You see they are used to money and modern lifestyles so they cannot stay here...” [A 55-year old male non-migrant].

6.0 Conclusions

This paper assessed the challenges that internal return migrants face in reintegration in the Wa municipality. The study has shown that closely about 60.0% of the returnees were males who were young (between the ages of 28-37 years) (61.3%). This implies that most returnees of the municipality were relatively young male adults whose resources could be harnessed for the socio-economic development of the Municipality and the region as a whole. The main underlying determinant for their return was family related factors (32.1%) followed by unemployment and low incomes at their destinations (24.9%). The reasons for their return appeared to have had some implications on their reintegration after the return. For instance, the majority of the returnees admitted that they faced some challenges in reintegration which included frequent demands for money and other material things followed by difficulties in getting jobs and low incomes. Others indicated that they encountered frustrations aside the difficulty adjusting to local traditions and the slow pace of business activities among others.

With the exception of sex, a Chi-Square Test Statistic results revealed a significant relationship between returnees' length of stay in southern Ghana, age, level of education and marital status vi-a-vis the kind of reintegration difficulties faced in the study area. In particular, returnees who had no formal education and were married and had stayed quite short at their destinations encountered more reintegration challenges compared to their counterparts. Consequently, most of the returnees expressed their desire to migrate again in future. The desire of the return migrants to re-migrate perhaps might be due to the reintegration problems confronting them. Meanwhile, the study has shown that most of the returnees have relocated away from their family houses to reduce frequent family dependency. The present findings suggest that families of returnees are critical to the successful reintegration of returnees. This assertion supports the basic tenets of the structural approach to return migration that the family organization and other origin contextual factors are necessary for a successful reintegration of returnees (Thomas, 2008).

Similarly, the assistance of family members and friends is indispensable for the social reintegration of newly-arrived returnees in the study area. As observed in the study, some returnees upon arrival began to expand their social networks by participating actively in social gatherings such as funerals, weddings, naming ceremonies among others all in a bid to lessen the reintegration problems faced. What was more disturbing in the study was the decision of most returnees to re-migrate to southern Ghana. Such decisions might be as a result of the reintegration difficulties encountered in the Wa municipality.

7.0 Policy recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following policy recommendations are prescribed for addressing returnees reintegration difficulties: First, there should be well-designed policy strategies to assist return migrants in the Wa

municipality to readjust successfully. For instance, returnees could be offered some skilled training and small loan facilities to enable them establish themselves so as to reduce unemployment and poverty among them. Meanwhile, some orientation could be given to return migrants shortly after arrival to prepare them for changes and challenges they are likely to face.

As observed from the study, the main reintegration difficulty facing returnees is frequent family demands. Therefore, it is recommended that families of returnees be educated on the negative implications of their demands on returnees. Meanwhile, the study recommends that more academic inquiry should be undertaken nationwide to actually ascertain the reintegration ordeals of internal return migrants. Finally, the government and other key stakeholders should develop practical policy frameworks to reduce the current imbalances in development that exist between the north and the south. This could be done by establishing local sustainable industries which will depend on local raw materials such as shea nuts in the northern part of the country and also invest in the youth in agriculture module roll-out by the ministry of youth and employment. This approach will help reduce poverty and the frequent north-south migration among the youths from northern Ghana.

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